

## Bugging Is No Joke

White House spokesman Ronald Ziegler's flip dismissal of the attempted bugging of Democratic party national headquarters is in keeping with the Nixon Administration's casual attitude toward the issue of electronic surveillance. The abortive espionage, Mr. Ziegler would have us understand, is nothing more than a "third-rate burglary" unworthy of comment.

The press secretary's assessment stands in ironic juxtaposition to the recent unanimous Supreme Court decision declaring domestic wiretapping by the Government without prior court approval unconstitutional. Because the very viability of an open society rests on the legal protection of freely exchanged ideas, any indiscriminate attempt to intrude on the privacy of law-abiding citizens by electronic means has sinister implications and requires investigation.

This is particularly true in light of the prior affiliations of those arrested. All five men have had C.I.A. connections and one is employed by President Nixon's re-election committee as a security coordinator. Another individual, E. Howard Hunt, whose name is listed in the address books of two of those apprehended, has been a consultant to a White House special counsel.

The President's campaign manager, former Attorney General John Mitchell, denies foreknowledge of the raid, and any evidence linking the Republican party to the incident is at this point circumstantial. The Democratic National Committee's suit against the Committee to Re-elect the President rings of election-year partisanship and hyperbole. The question remains, however, by whom and for what purpose the bugging was ordered. Mr. Hunt's refusal to make himself available for questioning, and the Republican National Committee's internal memo ordering those on the payroll to be silent, serve only to fuel speculation about the direction and motives of the act.

A thorough Federal investigation is in the best interest of both political parties and the nation as a whole.

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## Controlling the C.I.A.

Senator Cooper's proposal that the Central Intelligence Agency share with Congress its intelligence estimates is a logical corollary to the reassertion of Congressional responsibility in the making of foreign policy. The lawmakers obviously cannot fulfill their constitutional function in this vital area with maximum wisdom and effectiveness unless they have access to the best available information.

As matters now stand, the Executive enjoys almost exclusive access to information compiled by the intelligence community. Congress is thus at a serious disadvantage in attempting to weigh important policy decisions, especially when an Administration makes public only selective intelligence data designed to support its policies.

Senator Cooper has emphasized that his proposal is not aimed at C.I.A. operations, sources or methods, but is "concerned only with the end result—the facts and analyses of facts." It would not compromise and it does not seek to control intelligence operations. Indeed, Senate approval of the Cooper bill would represent in a sense a vote of confidence in the intelligence community—at least in its information-gathering function. ✓

The question of control over the vast intelligence network, and especially of the C.I.A.'s clandestine action operations, is raised in other proposals. These include three bills prepared by Senator Case designed to increase Congressional control over C.I.A. participation in foreign wars and quasi-military operations; a bill introduced by Senator McGovern requiring C.I.A. funds to appear as a single line item in the budget; and long-standing efforts to strengthen over-all Congressional oversight of the intelligence agency. The principle of such proposals merits support of a Congress that too long has neglected its essential role in the formulation of United States foreign policy. ✓

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# Newsman at House Hearing Accuse U.

## of Attempting Censorship

By MARJORIE HUNTER  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 25—Representatives of the nation's news media accused the Government today of attempted censorship in blocking publication of the Pentagon study of the Vietnam war.

Except in time of declared war, the news executives told Congress, the Government has no right to exercise "prior restraint" to prevent publication of information in the public interest.

The panel of newsmen appeared before a House Government Operations subcommittee to defend The New York Times, The Washington Post and other newspapers that have published parts of the Pentagon study and to criticize what was termed the Government's excessive secrecy.

J. Edward Murray, president-

elect of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, testified that the editors who decided to publish the secret data "are just as loyal, just as patriotic, as any man in this room or in the White House."

### Defends Record of Press

Declaring he felt that newspapers have been "under unjust assault" in recent weeks, Mr. Murray said that he was appearing before the House subcommittee "to defend the rights of the newspaper editor, which, not at all incidentally, are the rights of every American citizen."

He said he felt that the record of the nation's newspapers in reporting the war in Vietnam "is better than that of the executive branch" of the Government.

He noted that the newspaper editors' society as early as

1967, had begun to criticize the Government for "excessive secrecy." He said that the society's Freedom of Information Committee had reported in 1967 that "President Johnson continues to hurt his image and his credibility by consistently trying to make the news sound or seem better than it is."

Mr. Murray said he hoped that one by-product of publication of the secret study "will be to restore public confidence in the traditional axiom that you can believe what you read in your newspapers."

### Guild Head Testifies

Until recently, Mr. Murray was managing editor of The Arizona Republic. He jokingly told the subcommittee that the place of; his next job was "classified for the moment."

Charles A. Perlik Jr., president of the American News-

paper Guild, testified that he felt that the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press "faces its most serious challenge in memory, if not, indeed, in our history as a nation."

He said that the guild, representing 35,000 news and commercial employees, and many of its principal local unions unanimously supported publication of the Pentagon study.

He said that "once the public's right to know is abridged by government censorship of the press," the credibility of both the press and the government are destroyed.

Richard Kleeman, Washington correspondent for The Minneapolis Tribune and chairman of the Freedom of Information Committee for Sigma Delta Chi, a journalism society, suggested that further threats

to freedom of the press could be in the offing.

"How soon will the next one occur, and the next, and the next?" he asked.

John R. Callahan, vice president of McGraw-Hill Publications Company, representing the American Business Press, Inc., suggested the need for more periodic or continuing review of classified material by an independent agency or group, not the agency that did the original classifying.

Others criticizing the Government's attempt to block publication of the study were W. Bradford Wiley, president of John Wiley and Sons, Inc., representing the Association of American Publishers; and J. W. Roberts, Washington bureau chief of Time-Life Broadcasting, chairman of the Freedom of Information Committee of Radio-Television News Directors.